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WHAT IS PRIVATEERING?

MANY people were and still are of opinion that privateering, as between European powers at least, was abolished many years ago, and it may be of interest to see on what foundation this opinion rests.

In 1856, the plenipotentiaries who signed the Treaty of Paris sat in conference, and on the preamble that 'maritime law in time of war had long been the subject of deplorable disputes,' they adopted a solemn Declaration, which has since been known as the 'Declaration of Paris,' and of which the first article is the following: 'Privateering is and remains abolished.' By this Declaration, those states who signed it were of course bound; and all civilised states have since acceded to it, except the United States, Mexico, and Spain. One might think that nothing could be more explicit than the terms of this article; yet subsequent events have proved that the want of a definition of the first word in it has raised grave doubts as to what operations at sea are actually abolished.

A privateer is a vessel which belongs to a private owner, but sails under a commission granted by a responsible government, and carrying authority to the grantee to wage war according to the usages of naval warfare against the power specified in the commission. With the commission there are issued instructions for the guidance of the holder; and the government may require the deposit of a certain sum or the delivery of a bond as security against the violation of those instructions. The government may further withdraw the commission, if it has been misused, or if the instructions it contains have been disregarded; and when such commissions were wont to be issued by this country, our law held that the owners of the vessels commissioned might also be held liable in damages for the consequences of such misuse or disregard. The war-ships of neutral powers are entitled to visit a privateer and demand exhibition of her commission, in order that they may satisfy

themselves of its legality; and the reason for this exception to the rule of international law which declares that vessels of war cannot be visited, obviously is, that a privateer does not bear a public character, as a war-ship does. All these safeguards have been devised, or at least all these usages have gradually become recognised by civilised nations, with a view to the prevention of very obvious risks. So long as naval discipline is exercised on board a ship, and so long as her movements are really controlled by the state to which she belongs, some security is afforded that the laws of war as understood between the belligerent powers will be observed. But neither of these conditions has been fulfilled in the case of privateers. The annals of the eighteenth century tell terrible tales of the excesses committed by privateers on the high seas. These vessels having got beyond the reach of any control which the war-ships of their own country could exercise over them, and being manned often by desperate men, spared neither life nor property, and sometimes made but small discrimination between the ships of the enemy and those of neutral countries. Hence the article of the Declaration of Paris which has been quoted was hailed at the time as a humane regulation, and has ever since been regarded as a canon of international law.

But an incident of the Franco-German war showed that there might arise very nice questions as to what 'privateering' exactly is, and that the decision of these questions would determine whether that article was as comprehensive and effectual as it appeared to be. In July 1870, a Prussian Decree ordered the creation of a voluntary naval force, and appealed to private individuals to place themselves and their ships at the disposal of the government. The Decree stated shortly the conditions under which these vessels and their crews would be accepted for the service of the Fatherland. The vessels were to be owned by private individuals; the crews would indeed enter the federal navy for the duration of the war, but were to be hired

by the owners; the officers were to receive a patent of their rank, and were assured that in case of extraordinary service rendered, their ship might at their request be permanently established in the navy. The object of the force was to attack and destroy French ships of war; and as a reward for this service, premiums were to be granted according to the importance of the vessels. The distribution of these premiums in proper proportions amongst the crew was to be intrusted to the owners. The French Minister, stating in a *note verbale* that his government viewed the German proposal with great apprehension, as being virtually a return to privateering in a disguised form, laid the matter before the English government for consideration. The advice of our Crown lawyers was taken on the point, and they gave an opinion which justified Lord Granville in making to the French government the reply that there were 'substantial distinctions between the proposed naval volunteer force sanctioned by the Prussian government and the system of privateering which the Declaration of Paris was intended to suppress.' The inference to be drawn from this reply of course was, that England could not undertake to represent to Prussia that the execution of her scheme would be regarded as a violation of the Declaration. In the end, the proposal of the Prussian government was not carried out, and the volunteer navy was never formed.

Now, it is perfectly true that, at the outset at anyrate, these vessels were to be employed against war-ships only; but this restriction of their operations would have been but temporary, because the announcement made at the commencement of the war, that Prussia would not capture private property at sea, was afterwards withdrawn. It has been well pointed out that the reason for this announcement being made at all was obviously that Prussia hoped thereby to induce France to adopt a similar policy, and that by this step the commerce of the former, which she was powerless to protect, would be spared, and the strength of the latter on the sea in a great degree rendered useless.

Now that a cool judgment may be formed on the subject, it may be said with safety that it is difficult to see any real difference between the volunteer vessels as proposed to be organised and the privateers which it was intended to eliminate from European warfare. Both classes of vessels are owned and equipped by private persons for the sake of gain; in both, the crews and officers are employed by private persons; and in both cases the result of this practice will inevitably be, that the acquisition of that gain which prompts the enterprise will be pursued even though it involve the disregard of the rules of naval war. Besides this, the French government pointed out, with great acuteness, that the clause in the Decree which provided for the distribution of the premiums by the owners effectually stamped the enterprise as essentially private. It is to be admitted, indeed, that a volunteer navy is under naval discipline, while privateers are not; but this is a difference of degree only, for even a privateer would recognise the authority of the admiral,

at least while within his reach; and the scheme of the Prussian government does not show that the naval control of these volunteers would be so close and complete as to guarantee obedience to naval commands.

It is improbable that a similar attempt will be made by any of the states who acceded to the Declaration of 1856 to evade the execution of its first article; but it is not unlikely that one of them may boldly assert that, like another famous international agreement, this Declaration has suffered 'the modifications to which most European transactions have been exposed;' and with that preliminary justification, may proceed to open violation of the stipulations which it has undertaken to observe. In such a case, it is probable that the governments of Europe would join in remonstrance against such a proceeding; and it is certain that the power to whose special prejudice the violation was committed would take an early opportunity of considering how far she on her part was bound by agreements entered into with a state so faithless.

It has been seen, then, that the essential characteristic of a privateer is that, though owned by private individuals, she is commissioned by a responsible government; and it is scarcely necessary to apply that description so as to distinguish her from pirates on the one hand and from merchant-vessels incorporated in the navy on the other. Pirates are those who, without any authority from any sovereign or state, commit depredations by sea or land; and as no single state is responsible for their acts, so every nation may seize and punish them. The incorporation of part of the mercantile marine of a nation in its regular navy is of course wholly legitimate; the vessels are as much subject to naval control as regular war-ships, and are in just the same intimate connection with the state itself.

A HOUSE DIVIDED AGAINST ITSELF.

CHAPTER XXV.

FRANCES went to Portland Place next day. She went with great reluctance, feeling that to be thus plunged into the atmosphere of the other side was intolerable. Had she been able to feel that there was absolute right on either side, it would not have been so difficult for her. But she knew so little of the facts of the case, and her natural prepossessions were so curiously double and variable, that every assault was painful. To be swept into the faction of the other side, when the first impassioned sentiment with which she had felt her mother's arms around her had begun to sink inevitably into that silent judgment of another individual's ways and utterances which is the hindrance of reason to every enthusiasm, was doubly hard. She was resolute indeed that not a word or insinuation against her mother should be permitted in her presence. But she herself had a hundred little doubts and questions in her mind, traitors whose very existence no one must suspect but herself. Her natural revulsion from the thought of being forced into partisanship gave her a feeling of strong opposition and resistance against everything that might be

said to her, when she stepped into the solemn house in Portland Place, where everything was so large, empty, and still, so different from her mother's warm and cheerful abode. The manner in which her aunt met her strengthened this feeling. On their previous meeting, in Lady Markham's presence, the greeting given her by Mrs Cavendish had chilled her through and through. She was ushered in now to the same still room, with its unused look, with all the chairs in their right places, and no litter of habitation about; but her aunt came to her with a different aspect from that which she had borne before. She came quickly, almost with a rush, and took the shrinking girl into her arms. 'My dear little Frances, my dear child, my brother's own little girl!' she cried, kissing her again and again. Her ascetic countenance was transfigured, her gray eyes warmed and shone.

Frances could not make any eager response to this warmth. She did her best to look the gratification which she knew she ought to have felt, and to return her aunt's caresses with due fervour; but in her heart there was a chill of which she felt ashamed, and a sense of insincerity which was very foreign to her nature. All through these strange experiences, Frances felt herself insincere. She had not known how to respond even to her mother, and a cold sense that she was among strangers had crept in even in the midst of the bewildering certainty that she was with her nearest relations and in her mother's house. In present circumstances, 'How do you do, aunt Charlotte?' was the only commonplace phrase she could find to say, in answer to the effusion of affection with which she was received.

'Now we can talk,' said Mrs Cavendish, leading her with both hands in hers to a sofa near the fire. 'While my lady was here, it was impossible. You must have thought me cold, when my heart was just running over to my dear brother's favourite child. But I could not open my heart before her; I never could do it. And there is so much to ask you. For though I would not let her know I had never heard, you know very well, my dear, I can't deceive you.—O Frances, why doesn't he write? Surely, surely, he must have known I would never betray him—to her, or any of her race.'

'Aunt Charlotte, please remember you are speaking of—'

'Oh, I can't stand on ceremony with you! I can't do it. Constance, that had been always with her, that was another thing. But you, my dear, dear child! And you must not stand on ceremony with me. I can understand you, if no one else can. And as for expecting you to love her and honour her and so forth, a woman whom you have never seen before, who has spoiled your dear father's life!—'

Frances had put up her hand to stay this flood, but in vain. With eyes that flashed with excitement, the quiet still gray woman was strangely transformed. A vivacious and animated person when moved by passion is not so alarming as a reserved and silent one. There was a force of fury and hatred in her tone and looks which appalled the girl. She interrupted almost rudely, insisting upon being heard, as soon as Mrs Cavendish paused for breath.

'You must not speak to me so; you must not—you shall not! I will not hear it.'

Frances was quiet too, and there was in her also the vehemence of a tranquil nature transported beyond all ordinary bounds.

Mrs Cavendish stopped and looked at her fixedly, then suddenly changed her tone. 'Your father might have written to me,' she said—"he might have written to *me*. He is my only brother, and I am all that remains of the family, now that Minnie, poor Minnie, who was so much mixed up with it all, is gone. It was natural enough that he should go away. I always understood him, if nobody else did; but he might have trusted his own family, who would never, never have betrayed him. And to think that I should owe my knowledge of him now to that ill-grown, ill-conditioned— O Frances, it was a bitter pill! To owe my knowledge of my brother and of you and everything about you to Markham—I shall never be able to forget how bitter it was.'

'You forget: Markham is my brother, aunt Charlotte.'

'He is nothing of the sort. He is your half-brother, if you care to keep up the connection at all. But some people don't think much of it. It is the father's side that counts.—But don't let us argue about that. Tell me how is your father? Tell me all about him. I love you dearly, for his sake; but above everything, I want to hear about him. I never had any other brother.—How is he, Frances? To think that I should never have seen or heard of him for twelve long years!'

'My father is—very well,' said Frances, with a sort of strangulation both in heart and voice, not knowing what to say.

"Very well!"—Oh, that is not much to satisfy me with, after so long! Where is he—and how is he living—and have you been a very good child to him, Frances? He deserves a good child, for he was a good son. Oh, tell me a little about him. Did he tell you everything about us? Did he say how fond and how proud we were of him? and how happy we used to be at home all together? He must have told you. —If you knew how I go back to those old days! We were such a happy united family. Life is always disappointing. It does not bring you what you think, and it is not everybody that has the comfort we have in looking back upon their youth. He must have told you of our happy life at home.'

Frances had kept the secret of her father's silence from every one who had a right to blame him for it. But here she felt herself to be bound by no such precaution. His sister was on his side. It was in his defence and in passionate partisanship for him that she had assailed the mother to the child. Frances had even a momentary angry pleasure in telling the truth without mitigation or softening. 'I don't know whether you will believe me,' she said, 'but my father told me nothing. He never said a word to me about his past life or any one connected with him; neither you nor—any one.' Though she had the kindest heart in the world, and never had harmed any one, it gave Frances almost a little pang of pleasure to deliver this blow.

Mrs Cavendish received it, so to speak, full

in the face, as she leaned forward, eagerly waiting what Frances had to say. She looked at the girl aghast, the colour changing in her face, a sudden exclamation dying away in her throat. But after the first keen sensation, she drew herself together and regained her self-control. 'Yes, yes,' she cried; 'I understand. He could not enter into anything about us without telling you of—others. He was always full of good feeling—and so just! No doubt, he thought if you heard our side, you should hear the other. But when you were coming away—when he knew you must hear everything, what message did he give you for me?'

In sight of the anxiety which shone in her aunt's eyes, and the eager bend towards her of the rigid straight figure not used to any yielding, Frances began to feel as if she were the culprit. 'Indeed,' she said, hesitating, 'he never said anything. I came here in ignorance. I never knew I had a mother till Constance came—nor any relations. I heard of my aunt for the first time from—mamma; and then to conceal my ignorance, I asked Markham; I wanted no one to know.'

It was some minutes before Mrs Cavendish spoke. Her eyes slowly filled with tears, as she kept them fixed upon Frances. The blow went very deep; it struck at illusions which were perhaps more dear than anything in her actual existence. 'You heard of me for the first time from— Oh, that was cruel, that was cruel of Edward,' she cried, clasping her hands together—'of me for the first time—And you had to ask Markham! And I, that was his favourite sister, and that never forgot him, never for a day!'

Frances put her own soft young hands upon those which her aunt wrung convulsively together in the face of this sudden pang. 'I think he had tried to forget his old life altogether,' she said; 'or perhaps it was because he thought so much of it that he could not tell me—I was so ignorant! He would have been obliged to tell me so much, if he had told me anything.—Aunt Charlotte, I don't think he meant to be unkind.'

Mrs Cavendish shook her head; then she turned upon her comforter with a sort of indignation. 'And you,' she said, 'did you never want to know? Did you never wonder how it was that he was there, vegetating in a little foreign place, a man of his gifts? Did you never ask whom you belonged to, what friends you had at home?—I am afraid,' she cried suddenly, rising to her feet, throwing off the girl's hand, which had still held hers, 'that you are like your mother in your heart as well as your face—a self-contained, self-satisfying creature. You cannot have been such a child to him as he had a right to, or you would have known all—all there was to know.'

She went to the fire as she spoke and took up the poker and struck the smouldering coals into a blaze with agitated vehemence, shivering nervously, with excitement rather than cold. 'Of course that is how it is,' she said. 'You must have been thinking of your own little affairs, and not of his. He must have thought he would have his child to confide in and rely upon—and then have found out that she was not of his

nature at all, nor thinking of him; and then he would shut his heart close—oh, I know him so well! that is so like Edward—and say nothing, nothing! That was always easier to him than saying a little. It was everything or nothing with him always. And when he found you took no interest, he would shut himself up.—But there's Constance,' she cried after a pause—'Constance is like our side. He will be able to pour out his heart, poor Edward, to her; and she will understand him. There is some comfort in that at least.'

If Frances had felt a momentary pleasure in giving pain, it was now repaid to her doubly. She sat where her aunt had left her, following with a quiver of consciousness everything she said. Ah, yes; she had been full of her own little affairs. She had thought of the mayonnaises, but not of any spiritual needs to which she could minister.—She had not felt any wonder that a man of his gifts should live at Bordighera, or any vehemence of curiosity as to the family she belonged to, or what his antecedents were. She had taken it all quite calmly, accepting as the course of nature the absence of relations and references to home. She had known nothing else, and she had not thought of anything else. Was it her fault all through? Had she been a disappointment to her father, not worthy of him or his confidence? The tears gathered slowly in her eyes. And when Mrs Cavendish suddenly introduced the name of Constance, Frances, too, sprang to her feet with a sense of the intolerable, which she could not master. To be told that she had failed, might be bearable; but that Constance, Constance! should turn out to possess all that she wanted, to gain the confidence she had not been able to gain, that was more than flesh and blood could bear. She sprang up hastily, and began with trembling hands to button up to her throat the close-fitting outdoor jacket which she had undone. Mrs Cavendish stood, her face lit up with the ruddy blaze of the fire, shooting out sharp arrows of words, with her back turned to her young victim; while Frances behind her, in as great agitation, prepared to bring the conference and controversy to a close.

HOW TO REGULATE A PATIENT'S DIET.

ALMOST of equal importance with the administration of remedies to a patient is the question of his feeding and diet; indeed, sometimes this becomes the point of consideration, and the amount of nourishment taken may make the difference between life and death. Unhappily, it is just such cases that are beset with difficulty. The patient may be exhausted, and refuse food; or he may be unconscious, and hardly able to swallow; or delirious, and violently averse to being fed. If the nurse is not impressed with the vital importance of getting the prescribed amount of food down, she is very likely to give up the attempt, and let her patient sink; yet patience, perseverance, and tact can often conquer what look like insurmountable obstacles. I remember one case where the family doctor, after consultation with a physician, had only this

comfort to give: '*If he can take nourishment, he may pull through;*' but so great was the weakness, nausea, and aversion to food, that it seemed a hopeless case. But the patient's nurse had taken in the situation, and by dint of tea-spoonfuls of milk and beef-tea, with occasional doses of brandy and pieces of ice, she succeeded in getting the prescribed amount taken, and retained; and it is not difficult to picture the satisfaction of thus rescuing a dear one from the very gates of the grave.

In another case, the patient, a heavy, powerful woman and violently delirious, absolutely refused to touch the stimulants on which the doctor declared her life depended. On leaving at night, he remarked to a friend who had come to inquire: 'I can do no more. If she cannot be got to take a certain [and large] amount during the next twenty-four hours, she must die.' The friend, a frail little woman, quite unable to cope with the patient in strength, hit upon the device of putting a small quantity of brandy in beef-tea into a teacup. As she approached the bedside, the patient shrieked out: 'Go away! I've told the doctor and nurse, I won't take any of their nasty beef-tea or brandy. Go away! I tell you.'

'Very well,' was the quiet answer. 'But you know I would not give you anything nasty; and what I have in this cup is particularly nice; but if you don't want it, I can take it myself.'

'Oh, you needn't do that. If it's really nice, I don't mind a taste.' Then, after a sip: 'That's the queerest coffee I ever tasted, but it is not bad; I don't mind finishing it.' In a little while came the welcome remark: 'I don't mind having a little more of that coffee; only I won't have her [the nurse, who had given up in despair] come near me.'

This kind of thing continued through the night; and by the morning, the patient had taken a new lease of life, thanks to the tact and perseverance of a woman of wit.

It so happens that in both these instances success was achieved by amateurs; but as a rule, such grave cases need professional care, and the inexperienced nurse will only have to battle with milder forms of difficulty, and by keeping to the following simple rules, much of the difficulty will vanish:

1. *Try to be punctual.*—I say try, because it is not always possible to keep exactly to specified times; but as far as practicable, regularity in meals should be observed. In convalescence especially, it is important that the patient should never be kept waiting. All should be ready at the proper time, and the meal served without any questioning as to whether the invalid is 'inclined' for food. If asked, the chances are ten to one he will refuse, when, if given as a matter of course, he will take it without grumbling. Breakfast should be served as soon after the patient's waking as possible, and before the tidying-up process commences.

2. *See that the food is properly served.*—By this I mean that china, plate, and linen should be spotlessly clean, and free from smear or stain, and that everything likely to be wanted should be ready to hand. If the patient is fond of flowers, two or three laid on the cloth will be welcome; and a nurse should bear in mind that a daintily served meal is far more likely to be

attractive than a tray of food put together 'anyhow.' That the cooking shall be good, is of course a necessity; and whatever is put before a delicate appetite should be either cold or hot, never in the lukewarm state that demands hunger as sauce.

3. *Never give much food at a time.*—This is a point on which an inexperienced nurse is very liable to make mistakes; in her anxiety to induce the patient to take the nourishment so essential to his recovery, she is very apt to offer him a heaped-up plateful, which he contemplates with a shudder; whilst a small quantity of the same food would be received without a murmur. It follows, therefore, that in such cases the number of meals must be increased in proportion to the amount of nourishment to be taken. In severe cases, it is sometimes necessary to give food every half-hour, or even oftener; and it is then advisable to make a list of the amount of nourishment, medicine, and stimulant to be taken in the twenty-four hours, and of the times at which they should be given. If each item is scored through as taken, and a mark put against the things omitted, the doctor will be able to see at a glance how far his orders have been carried out. Of course this plan is only needful in bad cases.

4. *Vary the diet.*—This is another of the many points frequently neglected, and unfortunately, not by the home-nurse only. It is wonderful how seldom even the professed nurse remembers that it is possible to have too much of such a good thing as beef-tea made only in one way; yet I should say there are few people who pass through a lengthy illness without thoughts anything but friendly towards the inventor of that beverage.

Space prevents our dwelling on the subject of invalid cookery, important as it is; but beef-tea is in such universal request, that every nurse should remember that it may be made with water in at least four or five ways, each having its specific flavour; it may also be varied by using half-beef, half-veal, or by combining beef, veal, and mutton. Some invalids will take it more readily as jelly, which may be varied in strength and flavour to almost any extent. In convalescence, the addition of rice, lentils, or fresh vegetables (as allowed) will make a pleasant change; and by taking a little thought and care, a nurse can save her patient from the loathing of food, and consequent irritability, so frequently associated with the nourishing treatment. Should the patient be unable to finish a meal, the remains must be at once removed, and not allowed to stand about, on the chance of being taken later on. The chances are greatly more in favour of what remains being finished, if it is taken away immediately and freshly served on the next occasion. Indeed, no food of any kind must be allowed to remain in the sickroom, for the patient will be constantly throwing off impurities, readily absorbed by both solids and liquids, which, if allowed to remain any length of time, become actually poisoned and quite unfit for use. At the same time, a nurse should be able to lay her hand on food and drink at a moment's notice; and for this purpose it is of advantage to have a slab or shelf outside the door. If this convenience is not to be had, a small table or ordinary bedroom chair may be used, and the

food covered with a piece of gauze or muslin. Stimulants must be given only under medical orders, and should be as carefully measured as medicine. When a certain amount is ordered, the nurse should be particular in ascertaining whether it is to be taken through the night, and whether with food. As a rule, stimulants are given diluted with water according to the patient's taste; brandy may be put into either milk or beef-tea if liked, and in warm weather, ice will be found a welcome dilutant.

If the patient is well enough to sit up, he will be more likely to take kindly to food if he is comfortably propped up with pillows and the meal daintily served on a bed-table, a simple and very useful contrivance, which any carpenter will make for a few shillings. If the patient is too weak to sit up, his food had better be given in a feeder, a sort of covered cup with a curved spout; and the nurse will best be able to support him by passing her arm under the pillow and raising his head on that, instead of merely putting her hand at the back of his neck. It is curious how some patients will object to a feeder, in spite of its cleanliness and comfort. Unreasonable as is the fancy, it had better be humoured, and a china tea-pot with an upright spout substituted. If this fails to give satisfaction, a tumbler or teacup may be tried; but it must not be more than half-filled, and even then, some portion of the contents will very likely get spilled, so that a clean napkin should always be tucked under the patient's chin before commencing.

In cases of extreme exhaustion, it is better not to let the patient raise his head. He must then be fed with a teaspoon, and the food given slowly and with care. If much milk is being taken, it is a good plan to put it in a tumbler, and let the patient suck it through a glass tube bent to the right angle. These tubes can be procured at any chemist's, and are a comfort equally to patient and nurse.

Such are the general rules for sickroom diet and feeding; but each case will have its special features, and the good nurse will always be ready to adapt herself to circumstances, and to yield implicit obedience to the doctor, in this as in all things, even though he give instructions that cut at the root of all her preconceived ideas.

SWEET GILLIAN.

CHAPTER III.

EARLY the next morning, Lionel was off on his quest. He found Gillian already at the appointed spot, and although at a distance she did not know him in his civilian garb, when she recognised him, he felt a thrill to see what he naturally fancied to be a flush of pleasure cross her face. Still, she was Miss Ramsden of the Hall; and he, whatever he might have been before, was but a corporal in a line regiment, so that, although he was already smitten by her grace and beauty, he maintained the demeanour of a privileged inferior.

'You must have thought it very presumptive of me, Miss Ramsden,' he said, 'to ask you to give me another interview; but I know no one else here on whom I can depend to give me the

information I want. I met Trent after I left you yesterday. All he could tell me was that my father died in great anger with me, and disinherited me in favour of your father.'

'And I fear I can add very little to what Mr Trent has told you,' said Gillian. 'Simply, Mr Gaskell, I would warn you against him, if any old grudge still exists between you; and although I avoid speaking ill of any one as a rule, I do not think I should believe all he said.'

A feeling of joy thrilled through Lionel. If this bright-eyed, honest-speaking girl was really engaged to Edward Trent, most assuredly she would not speak of him in this manner.

'I know, or, rather, I remember enough about him,' said Lionel, 'to be enabled to place a correct value on what he says, Miss Ramsden; for instance, he told me one thing which I did not believe, about you.'

'About me? What did he say??'

'He said you were engaged to be married.'

'I am glad you did not believe it, Mr Gaskell,' said Gillian. 'But you will hear it often. Indeed, I believe it is regarded as a fact by many people who ought to know me better than to think that I should swear to love, honour, and obey a man for whom I have the greatest contempt.'

'I am so glad to hear you say so!' exclaimed Lionel, unable to repress his feelings. 'I mean, I should be so sorry to think that you should throw yourself away on him.'

'But,' said Gillian, 'where there is smoke there is fire. I don't know why it is, Mr Gaskell, but I feel that I may confide in you.'

'Oh, that you may, Miss Ramsden!' enthusiastically exclaimed the young soldier.

'He is ceaseless in his efforts to get me to accept him,' continued the girl. 'I have no peace from him, although I have firmly refused him, and the worst of the matter is that papa himself wishes me to marry him.'

'Squire Ramsden wished his daughter to marry a pettifogging country attorney, who ten years back was sweeping out an office in Lincoln's Inn!' exclaimed Lionel. 'How can he possibly think that such a marriage would be happy and in keeping with your position here? You amaze me, Miss Ramsden!'

'You will be amazed still more, Mr Gaskell,' continued Gillian, 'when I tell you that, to strengthen himself and to weaken my resistance, Mr Trent told me that unless I accepted him, he would ruin and disgrace us.'

'How could he do that?' asked Lionel. Then, after a pause: 'Miss Ramsden, if he says he can ruin and disgrace you, and your father urges you to accept him, depend upon it that there is some secret between them—please, do not interpret my words into derogation of your father—which is at the root of the whole affair. But I feel certain that in course of time something will be found out that will astonish us and every one but the principal agent. I cannot believe that as a punishment for what were mere boyish excesses at the worst, my father, who loved me as being the nearest human tie which bound him to earth, should have disinherited me; and I cannot believe that his last feelings towards me were of anger. I should not have suspected anything at all, I think, if you had not told me

that your father wished you to marry Edward Trent. Why should you be doomed to a man who, unless he has improved out of recognition of late years, has not a single attractive feature in his character?"

They were sitting side by side on the fallen trunk of a huge oak, and as the cheery sun slanted through the trellis-work of young leaves upon the graceful figure of the girl, Lionel felt that what seemed to be merely an accident was in reality a merciful intervention of Providence, which had sent him here to shelter from coming evil so fair a creature.

"Did you never hear of me, Miss Ramsden, before you came to Hingleton?" he asked.

"Never. I was at school when this great change in our station occurred; and although I had heard my father speak of "old Tom Gaskell," I hardly knew who he was or where he lived."

"Hush! Miss Ramsden. I hear voices close by. I would not have you discovered here with me for worlds. You must return home, and—May I see you again to-morrow? I feel, somehow or other, as if I had been sent to ward off a terrible evil from you; and I don't know how to thank you for your kindness in making a confidant of me."

"Mr Gaskell, I am only a simple country girl," said Gillian, "yet I intuitively know whom I can trust and whom I cannot.—Good-bye, until to-morrow."

This time, Lionel Gaskell raised the girl's hand to his lips. He watched her active form disappear in the plantation, then listened. The voices seemed to be in the lane immediately underneath him, and one of them he recognised to be that of Edward Trent. Creeping noiselessly along, he arrived at the palings which separated the meadow-land from the lane, and which stood at the top of a high, thickly grown bank, and peering through a fissure, he saw Edward Trent talking to a rough-looking man clad in a velvet coat, and corduroy trousers tucked into leggings. Trent was saying: "Very well, Nehemiah. Mind, the risk is all mine, and the gain yours. The squire and the colonel are determined to stop poaching; and they both, finding that keepers and watchers are of no good, have given me full powers to act. Of course, I know you and all your lot well enough; I know all your haunts, where you sell the game, even your gibberish and watchwords."

"Blest if I doan't think you know 'most everything, Master Trent," said the man.

"No; I'm not so perfect as that; but I know that a poacher fears a lawyer more than he does all the keepers in the county."

"That's true for you," mumbled the man.

"Well," continued Trent, "if you manage what I say, it will be worth your while, and not a bit of harm shall come to you. Don't be up to any jobs until you hear from me. I'll write to you at the old place."

Then they separated; the rough-looking man taking the field-path in the direction of Hingleton, Edward Trent going towards the park gate. He went straight to the squire's study, and found the colonel with a London paper in his hand, holding forth to his friend the squire about the situation in Europe.

"Well, Mr Trent," said Colonel Adamthwaite, "so those blackguards the poachers are still at it, in spite of all your sharpness and activity. However, I'm determined to put a stop to it, and I will, even if I keep a company of my regiment on the watch all night with loaded muskets."

"I admit that my efforts haven't as yet met with much success, colonel," said Trent; "but if in a short time I don't bring the ringleader before you at petty sessions, I'll throw up the job and admit myself beaten. I've had my eye on him for some time, although he doesn't belong to these parts, and I've got the trap nicely adjusted for him to walk into."

"Well, I wish you success," said the colonel; "and you may depend upon it that if I'm on the bench, he'll get a sentence that will frighten his mates for some time to come.—Hello! It's eleven o'clock, and the *Comet* calls at the *Arms* at half-past. I must be off." So, after shaking hands cordially with the squire and nodding slightly to Trent, the old soldier left the room. Outside, he met Gillian, fresh-cheeked from her run across the park. "Well, Sweet," he said, "how go things? Your precious adorer is inside. Nice man he is! Trying to worm himself round the poor old squire by turning poacher-trapper. Almost hope he'll fail in some new dodge he's up to, although I am hot against the vagabonds. Has he been bothering you lately?"

"Yes, colonel; he doesn't give me much peace."

"Impudent scoundrel!" exclaimed the colonel. "I've half a mind to haul him out and give him a thrashing. Some day I will, and risk the consequences of hammering a lawyer.—Well, I'm off to London; Bonaparte's at his old tricks again."

"Oh, and then there will be more battles and killing!" sighed Gillian. "How horrible! But, colonel, you won't go?"

"I must go if I'm under orders," said the old soldier. "But good-bye; I've got to catch the coach; and when I return, I'll bring you all the news and something pretty from London town." As Gillian watched him striding down the avenue, she thought not only of the blank which would be caused in her life if misfortune should overtake him in case of war, but of another who would be obliged to go across the sea to fight his country's battles—or the poor corporal, who already occupied so large a place in her heart.

Edward Trent and the squire meanwhile were talking earnestly.

"You say she is still firm in her refusal, Trent?" asked the latter.

"Yes," replied the lawyer, almost savagely. "She avoids me when she can, and treats me like an utter stranger."

"Very well, then," said the squire, rising and plunging his hands deeply into his breeches' pockets; "matters must take their course. I'm not going to force the girl against her will. Rather than do so, I would leave Hingleton to-morrow, and face the ruin and disgrace with which you threaten me."

The lawyer stared at the squire with mouth and eyes wide opened for a few seconds; but

he quickly recovered himself, and said : 'Think again, squire, before you decide upon such a course. Mind, I want to do things as pleasantly as possible ; but a bargain's a bargain. Remember, also, I have your letter dated during Mr Gaskell's illness, in which you say : "I am the next of kin to Thomas Gaskell, now that his son is as good as dead. If you can get Hingleton for me—and as a lawyer, you will not find much difficulty in doing so by proving to the old gentleman that his son is dead—you may name your own terms."—Very well. You came here with Gillian, who was then sixteen. I fell in love with her at first sight, and I determined that the price of my efforts on your behalf should be her hand. I was successful, and I claim my reward. Mind, no one but you and I knows anything about the certificate of death. The colonel and Simson only witnessed the new will. I give you a week to decide, squire.—Good-morning.' So saying, he left the room.

The squire stood against the mantel-piece the very picture of misery and despair. Either of the courses open to him was fraught with unhappiness. If he persuaded his daughter to marry Trent, he sacrificed her to his own mean and selfish motives. If he stuck to his last resolution of letting matters go, Trent would expose him as one who had in fact ousted the rightful heir from his property by working on the disturbed mind of a dying man. He would be disgraced and ruined. But if Gillian and Trent were married, the secret would remain buried for ever ; and in the now improbable event of the appearance of Lionel Gaskell upon the scene, he would simply be told what was the universal belief, that he had been disinherited for his extravagances and escapades.

John Ramsden was a weak man, and although, in ordinary mundane matters, a generous, honourable man, the conflict between duty and inclination was severe within him. As often as he decided on the side of duty, the hideous phantoms of disgrace and ruin rose before him. Finally, his weakness prevailed, and he resolved that Gillian should marry Trent.

When Lionel met Gillian the next morning, he told her of what he had overheard in the lane. She could offer no explanation of it, and did not appear to attach particular importance to it, remarking that Trent was constantly engaged in mysterious operations about the place, and that in all probability he was laying a plot for another poacher, upon the principle of setting a thief to catch a thief.

A week passed—the happiest week of Lionel's life, for he saw Gillian every day. Every day their intercourse became less strained and formal, every day ripened the mutual respect and admiration into a firm bond of intimacy. At the end of the week they were 'Gillian' and 'Lionel' to each other ; and yet, what was to be the issue of it all ? On the twentieth day of their acquaintance, on a bright sweet morning in mid-May, they were sitting together on the trunk of a fallen tree. For the first time during their acquaintance they seemed to have nothing to say to one another, the fact being that the one knew well how much the other had to say. Then Lionel broke the ice, and without any preliminary fanfaronade of rhetoric and eloquence, asked

Gillian if she could give him her heart. The girl had no words to form into an answer, but simply threw her arms round his neck and nestled her face against his ; and in this appropriate position they remained for some exquisite moments, whilst a blackbird piped out a pean of joy from a bough hard by, and a straining, horrified human face peering over the fence drank in the scene greedily. The face, of course, belonged to Mr Edward Trent, who had for some days suspected the regular daily absences of Gillian from home, and who, after many fruitless attempts, had at length hunted down his prey. He watched the happy, blind couple for some moments, then slipping quietly down, hastened away towards Hingleton. And the happy, blind couple remained there long after he had gone, until the old clock chimed mid-day, and Gillian rose to return home. 'And now, Sweet,' quoth Lionel, 'I am going to call you Sweet, as every one else does—we are bound together, and the one question remains, what is to be done ? Certainly, I shall proclaim myself to your father ; but before I do so, I must have an interview with your good old friend the colonel, who, I am sure, from what you say, will help us through all difficulties.'

A parting embrace, and they went unwillingly to their separate ways, their hearts filled with the greatest happiness, in spite of the prospect of difficulty and delay which was open before them.

CHAPTER IV.

Early the next morning, a note was handed to Lionel as he was at breakfast. As the address was written in a delicate female hand, his heart bounded within him. Then he opened it gently and read :

MY DEAREST LIONEL—Edward Trent has found out all about us ; and I am in momentary expectation of being summoned to an interview with father in the study. It may be better, perhaps, to keep the affair quiet for a little time, so I will ask you to meet me to-night at eight o'clock at the White Coppice stile, which you know well, instead of at our usual time and place, and we can then arrange our plans, secure from interference. I have so much to tell you.—Ever your affectionate,

GILLIAN RAMSDEN.

The young man read this note a dozen times, and a dozen times imprinted his lips upon the paper, then folded it away carefully next his heart, and waited for the long weary hours to pass until he should again be side by side with the being he loved most in the world. It was a little strange, he thought, for Gillian to make an appointment at such a time and place, but he had such implicit confidence in her sense, that he knew she must have some sufficient reason for so doing.

In the meanwhile, tremendous news had shaken Europe from one end to the other. On the night of the 19th of March, Louis XVIII. had fled from Paris to Lille before the advance of Bonaparte from the south. On the 20th, Napoleon entered the Tuilleries ; and by the middle of May, had, by incredible efforts, gathered around him an army of one hundred and thirty thousand men. The

British Cabinet had met in hot haste ; recruiting officers were hard at work plying their vocation throughout the British empire, for the cream of the army, the veterans of the Peninsula, were frittering away their strength in unproductive campaigns against the Americans. Bonham was in a state of great excitement, for the headquarters of the county regiment were there, and the one topic of conversation on everybody's lips was its probable instant departure for the seat of war. Every one indeed was smitten with the war-fever, although prayers for peace had been universal for long months past, and the difficulty the sergents had to contend with was, not the bringing of recruits, but the selection of the best men amongst the hundreds who presented themselves. Lionel had seen enough of war, and this abundance of fighting material gave him hope that his services with the Fenshire Regiment might be dispensed with ; for, with so dangerous an enemy as Edward Trent about, he dare not leave Gillian alone with a father prejudiced against her.

The long day at length drifted into night, and Lionel, full of joy and hope, started for the White Coppice to meet his beloved. He had not felt so careless and light-hearted since he had trod this same road, in the reverse direction, at the same hour of night, six years before on his way to enlist ; and never before had nature seemed so beautiful as now, when the rising moon cast all sorts of weird shadows over fields and hedges. White Coppice he remembered well as being reputed haunted, and therefore the goal of many a secret expedition undertaken by him and other adventurous youths in quest of the gray spirit of a murdered tramp. It was a great deal more than a coppice, being, in fact, an extensive corner of thick wood, almost impenetrable by daylight, absolutely Cimmerian at night, a favourite haunt of poachers, and, for the reason above stated, generally shunned by the superstitious country-folk.

When Lionel arrived there a few minutes before eight, he could not help wondering why Gillian should have named such a spot for a trysting-place, so weird and uncanny it seemed in its absolute stillness and almost impenetrable gloom, rendered perhaps more solemn by the pale light of the moon shining on the tall white columns of scattered beech-trees. However, he swung himself on to the stile which announced a faint path through the coppice, and sat listening for any sound which might herald the arrival of his love. Eight o'clock boomed simultaneously from the Hall stables and old Hingleton belfry. No Gillian. A quarter-past, half-past. Lionel grew impatient and suspicious, and was on the point of plunging boldly into the wood in the direction of the Hall, when a slight noise amongst the bushes arrested him. He remained motionless. The sound continued ; but Lionel knew the coppice to be a happy hunting-ground for rabbits, and went forward ; then he heard a distinct low whistle, and muttering the word 'Poachers,' he stooped, as if to screen himself from observation. Scarcely had he done so, when he felt a heavy hand laid on his shoulder, and recognised in the moonlight the face of the man he had seen talking to Edward Trent in the lane. His first impulse was to shake him off roughly

and demand his business ; but when he saw appear from the gloom like so many phantoms half-a-dozen other wild-looking figures, he felt that, as he was unarmed, discretion was the better part of valour.

'Ha !' said the man ; 'so you're the chap as sneaks about and watches of us, and gets us lagged without showin' hisself, is you ! Just caught you proper, my young buck. And now, you'll jes' be one of us, and if we're lagged, you'll be lagged too, and get a taste of what you've caused a score o' better men than you to get.'

'I assure you' — began Lionel, but was stopped short by a broad, unsavoury hand being clapped over his mouth.

'Hush, you fool ! Don't yer twig the watchers ! Down you go !'

Lionel looked in the direction indicated by his captor, and espied in the bright moonlight four men, clad as keepers and armed with guns. His idea was to shout for help ; but he was forced down behind a bush by his powerful captor. Such precaution, however, was useless so far as the poachers were concerned, and with a loud shout the keepers bore down on the group. In a very few seconds, what was apparently a desperate fight was kept up. One of the poachers, probably mistaking Lionel for a keeper, commenced a violent attack upon him ; and in self-defence, Lionel was compelled to pick up a gun lying by and return blow for blow. This he did with some success, until a tremendous blow on the head, seemingly from behind, stretched him on the ground, and he fell senseless. When he recovered, he was in a rough cart, in company with two keepers, jogging painfully along the road to Bonham. He was conscious of a throbbing pain in the head, and the moonlight shone upon great dark patches on his clothes, which could only be blood.

'What am I brought like this for ?' he asked.
'Where are you taking me ?'

'What are yer brought along here for, and where are we a-taking of you ?' repeated the keeper addressed in a surly voice. 'Why, you've been caught poachin', and we're a-takin' of you to Bonham lock-up. You're a deep un, you are, and you've given us a dance for some weeks ; but you're done for this time.'

'But I'm not a poacher,' said Lionel. 'I'm Lionel Gaskell, son of Squire Gaskell, who died five years ago.'

'Well, you'd better tell all that to the justices to-morrow at the sessions, and see if they'll believe it,' said the man. 'That ain't our business. We've found you with this yer gun about you, along with Nehemiah Buck's gang ; and if you can get out of it, yer can.'

So Lionel had to submit to be pushed into a dark, damp, evil-smelling hole known as Bonham lock-up. During the long hours of that night, the young man had ample leisure to put two and two together, and attribute the whole affair, not to accident, but to a mature plot of Edward Trent's. The missive he had so fondly kissed and pressed as coming from Gillian, no doubt was a forgery prepared by Trent. The consolation he had was that he would at any rate get justice done him on the morrow, and a fitting opportunity would be afforded him for proclaiming his identity. Then, wearied with

pain and loss of blood, he fell asleep in the small-hours of the morning, and was only awakened by the opening of his cell-door and the gruff announcement that he was wanted at the Sessions House. The market-place as he passed through was full of soldiers; and that further news of great import had arrived was evident from the excitement everywhere prevalent, the unusual crowds, and the universal absence of all signs of business. He recognised a great many of his old companions in arms, but nobody noticed him, and he passed through the crowd in the custody of a stalwart constable, and followed by the two keepers, without even attracting a remark concerning his woful appearance.

The Sessions House was almost empty, and there were but two justices on the bench. One of them he did not know; the other was Squire Ramsden, whom he recognised from Gillian's description. Two or three cases of theft and drunkenness were disposed of, and he was placed at the bar.

'So you're one of those rascals who can find no better means of gaining a livelihood than by stealing other people's game, are you?' said Squire Ramsden; 'and I'm instructed that you're the leader of a desperate gang, after whom we've been for weeks past.'

'I'm nothing of the kind,' said Lionel, colouring up. 'I'm Lionel Gaskell, son of the late Squire Gaskell of Hingleton.'

The other justice smiled, and said something about 'brazen-faced impudence to pass off for a man who had been long dead'; but Mr Ramsden turned for a moment deadly pale, although he managed to stammer out: 'Nonsense, my man. Don't try to come that gibberish over us.—Keeper, detail the circumstances of his arrest.' So the keeper related what we already know; and when he had finished, Squire Ramsden, without giving Lionel a chance to reply, said: 'Well, the case is clearly proved. This gun was found in your hand, and you had been using it violently. My brother justices and I are determined to stamp out this wholesale system of poaching, which has too long remained unchecked all about here; and as a warning, you are sentenced to two years' imprisonment.—Remove the prisoner. Next case!'

'Sir, Mr Ramsden!' began Lionel.

'Remove the prisoner immediately, jailer,' thundered the squire; and Lionel was about to be forcibly taken away, when an officer in uniform stepped up to the bench, saying: 'One moment, sir, if you will pardon my intrusion. This man whom you have just sentenced I recognise as John Hall, a corporal in my company. He is one of the smartest non-commissioned officers we have, and we sadly want non-coms. If you will allow him to exchange the jail for foreign service, I shall deem it a favour.'

'Well, sir,' said the squire, 'as you know, it's an interference with the course of justice; but under the circumstances, I accede to your request.—Prisoner, you are discharged.'

The regiment was ordered to parade after dinner, at one o'clock, and to start soon after en route for London and Dover. Lionel would just have time to arrange matters at the inn, and to send off a note to Gillian, but no more. With

another hour to spare, he could have posted over to Hingleton and contrived to bid her farewell; as it was, he could only inform her of his position, so that at anyrate she might get a passing glimpse of him. Before they left the court, Lionel went up to the captain who had extricated him from his predicament, and said: 'Captain, I have to thank you for your opportune kindness. If we arrive home again, I hope that you will not deem it presumption if I ask you to bear witness about my enlistment, in case I should wish to establish my identity as Lionel Gaskell of Hingleton.'

The captain looked astonished at such an announcement from a man who ten minutes before had stood convicted of poaching.

Lionel continued: 'I was wrongfully arrested, through the agency of Lawyer Trent, who has conceived a deadly hatred to me because I love the girl he wants to make his wife.'

'Why,' said the officer, 'Lawyer Trent is engaged to Miss Ramsden of the Hall.'

'No, sir; he is not, and never has been. But I am.'

'You—a corporal in a line regiment, engaged to Miss Ramsden!' exclaimed the captain.

'Why not, sir? I am as well born as she is, although I am but a corporal in a line regiment,' said Lionel. 'At anyrate, sir, if we have the good-luck to come back, I hope you will bear out my assertion, which I intend to make publicly, about the circumstances of my enlistment.'

'Certainly I will.'

Lionel saluted, and hastened to pay his reckoning at the inn, and once more to don his regiments.

There was such excitement in Hingleton as had not been for many years, when it was known that the regiment would pass through the village on its way to the seat of war. Flags and decorations were brought out from closets and lumber-rooms; the country-folk came pouring in from all directions; such business as the little place boasted was suspended, and long before the expected hour, every coign of advantage was occupied by a chattering, excited crowd. At the first crash of distant music, the excitement swelled into a loud murmur of 'Here they come!' and when a crowd of urchins, keeping step to the famous old air of *The Girl I left behind me*, swept round the corner of the street, popular feeling culminated in a tremendous rolling volley of cheers. Long Tom of Chelmsford, brandishing his tremendous gold-nobbed staff, led the way, and was by no means, in his own estimation, the most insignificant feature of the pageant. To him succeeded the fifes and drums; and then the gray-haired colonel on horseback; and then the regiment, seven hundred strong, the sergeants with their pikes on the flanks, the tattered regimental colours, upon which were just distinguishable the Sphinx and the word 'Badajos' in the midst, borne by two beardless youngsters, who had seen more service than their appearance warranted. Young men, the rank and file certainly were; many of them mere boys; but their square shoulders and sturdy limbs showed that they were of the right stuff, and every face bore an expression of joyful

enthusiasm at the prospect of having another hit at the French.

The squire, Gillian, and Edward Trent were on the steps of the parson's house; all three were looking for the same corporal of the same company, but with very different feelings. Lionel saw Sweet Gillian long before she saw him; and as he marched past, his earnest salute of departure was eagerly and tearfully returned by his betrothed. She saw no more: the brave young faces glowing in the bright May sun passed by rank after rank, the bayonets glistened and swayed, the music grew fainter and fainter; and when the last red coat was dimly visible in the cloud of dust raised by the tramp of many hundreds of feet, and the regiment had passed, she realised for the first time in her young life a sense of utter loneliness.

AN HOUR AMONG THE COLLIER'S.

THROUGH the earth's crust into a coal-mine! Will you come? Take first a glance round the pit-top; peer down the black hole you are to descend; look up at the huge wheels overhead, and comfort yourself with the thought that the ropes, though they seem so like spiders' threads, are made of steel and will bear thirty tons. Take this lamp, unless you prefer a candle stuck in your hat, collier-fashion; and as the cage—so the platform is called in which men and coal alike are conveyed—clicks on the catches, step in, clutch the iron rod which runs along its top to steady yourself, and prepare to drop a quarter of a mile in no time! A bell rings, and we are off. Before the qualmy sensation, so suggestive of sea-sickness, is fully realised, with a rattle and jerk the cage stops, and you find yourself bewildered and helpless; for the candles cast so dim a glimmer as merely to render the darkness visible. We will sit on this bench for a minute, till—as the phrase is—we 'get our pit eyes'; and then start, escorted by the courteous manager, to see such objects of interest as naturally attract a novice's attention.

First of all—while we are waiting for our carriage to drive up—let us pay a visit to the stables; capital stalls, cut out in the solid rock, at present untenanted, save by swarms of mice, which scamper off in all directions as we bring our lamps to bear on the well-stored mangers. Surprise number one. Wonderingly, we ask: 'How did mice get here?'

'Brought down in the hay, you know; and they multiply so alarmingly, that we keep cats, and pay them weekly wages, that they may wash down with milk their monotonous mousy diet. We shall see some of the horses as we go our rounds.' So our guide informs us, and adds: 'Come now; it is time we started for our drive.'

Accordingly, we return to the spot, whence divers small tunnels of impenetrable blackness radiate; each of us crams himself into an oblong box on wheels; and a train of a dozen or so of 'trams' as they are called, is at once set in motion by a plump powerful horse. He

has not seen daylight for eight years, we learn in answer to our questionings. The uniform temperature—warmer in winter, cooler in summer than on the surface—suits the equine constitution wonderfully; and then there is no rain underground. Dark as it is, our Dobbin has sense enough to step outside the tram-rails at any stoppage, and so the trams pass without touching him. Doubtless, many a whack on the heels has taught him this lesson, for the string of carts is drawn by a loose trace-chain only.

Don't omit, while going along this road cut through rock and coal, to keep a good lookout for any curiosities we may pass; only hold your head well down, or it will come in painful contact with the timber props which support the roof, and which rest at each side on stout upright posts. See! there is a perfect *Lepidodendron*, standing just as it grew, when these dark places of the earth constituted a swampy forest, densely covered with reeds and ferns, and trees of which the ornamental Monkey-shrub (*Araucaria imbricata*) is perhaps the best representative among our country's present-day growths. How many thousands of years have elapsed since this trunk—a core of stone within, but without, the actual bark with its seal-like markings stamped out in solid coal—waved its spiky branches beneath the open canopy of heaven! And yet, through all these aeons, pressed as in a girl's album, fern fronds of most fragile and exquisite forms, delicate as lace-work, as if photographed on stone, lie beneath the enormous mass of superadded strata, perfect as when they shot their graceful stems up into the steaming air in which our coal-measures were laid down in such lavish profusion. Verily, there be 'sermons in stones.'

'Show us where they are digging out the coal,' is naturally our first request as we leave our uncomfortable vehicle.

But if riding was bad, walking is worse; if that can be called walking, where, with bent neck and stooped shoulders, tall men progress with frequent head-bumpings along a road of a painfully low pitch. Soon we come where, by the dusky light of a flickering 'dip,' we see a half-naked collier lying on his side, the better to drive his pick into a narrow seam of coal; while, near by, others are hard at work on thicker veins, hewing out big blocks of shiny blackness, interspersed with cataracts of small coal, which other men shovel rapidly into trams, for conveyance to the upper regions. It is a busy scene, for all these honest fellows are on piecework.

As we go on to visit other workings, our guide stops at a point where a disused road runs down to the right, 'deeper and deeper still,' to tell us this odd story: 'This spot is believed by the miners to be haunted. They are, you know, very superstitious, and now, none of them will come this way without company. It seems that a carter, whose duty it was to push trams of coal along here to the horse-road we have just left, one day heard footsteps as of a man approaching him from the opposite direction. He stopped, to avoid a collision, and distinctly heard the stamping of heavy boots, and a sound as of some one scraping mud off them on the rails. He shouted to him to hurry up, but got no reply.'

He held out his candle at arm's length—but saw nothing. He went on to the spot whence the sounds had proceeded; but there was no one there. Incontinently, he bolted to the nearest workings and told his weird tale to sympathising ears. The story has been corroborated again and again by strangers, who had never heard of it.—Hush! there it is! Can't you hear it?

(Our lamps had been taken from us under the pretence of trimming them, and at this instant they went out, and we were in the blackness of darkness. Few people know what absolute darkness is.)

'Yes,' we faltered; 'we do hear a strange noise. How do you account for it?'

'I can't,' was the reply. 'It may be water in the abandoned road there. It may be an unexplainable echo. Sounds are audible at enormous distances underground. We had a similar scare years ago.' (Here the bailiff succeeded in relighting the lamps, to our great relief.) 'In another part of the mine, the men were constantly hearing mysterious knockings, which they quickly put down to Satanic agency. So I took careful measurements of the spot, and found it to be just under an iron foundry, where a steam-hammer was at work four hundred yards overhead. But the colliers stick to their own theory still.'

A little farther on we were told to climb on all-fours up a steep, low, and narrow cutting, technically called a 'gug' up and down which a small boy was dragging, apparently with the greatest ease, a wicker basket, fastened by a chain to a rope round his waist. At the top, he filled it with the coal which a collier was hewing; at the bottom, he emptied it into a tram such as we have described.

'This was the work which the last woman who worked underground had to do. Her son is employed here now. Just think what a change has taken place in the last thirty or forty years. At the present time, there is not, so far as I know, a single woman at colliery-work either underground or at the surface in the west of England, though, in other parts of the country, female labour is still used at the pit top.' Such was the manager's comment.

Again we march on in Indian file, stopping here and there to watch some swarthy giant—the dim light makes them look immense—drive in his pick with a dull thud and bring down avalanches of 'black diamonds'; or to notice how, with sledge-hammer and drill, holes in the rock are bored to receive the charge of powder; or hurry past, half choked by the pungent smoke, where the shot has just been fired, and the pleased workmen are shovelling up the copious results of their skilful blasting.

We have already noted some of the fossils of the vegetable life of long-past ages. Here we catch sight of living, and apparently thriving, spiders; though they are colourless and diaphanous, presumably from lack of light, and perhaps also through insufficient nutriment—for what can they find to eat? Not so the fungi, which hang, like huge puff-balls, from long threads rooted in the roof. But they, too, are pale and almost substanceless, so that if you hold a candle, or even clap your hands, against them, they crumble to powder. Looking at this strange

growth, we think of that imprisoned miner, who, when he was rescued, after many days of starvation, well-nigh dead, was found to be covered all over—face and hands and all—with a kindred plant. Oh, the horror of the quietness and stillness in which a fungus could thus root itself, and flourish on a living man!

'Now for an adventure, if you are venturesome,' our guide cries, as we reach the top of a long steep 'incline' worked by a steam-engine and an endless rope. 'Did you ever try "tobogganing" on snow? This is a good substitute—these bits of plank I have had made with a groove to run on one of the rails. Sit on it so, and off we go!'

'Off we go,' exactly described what happened; for we kept tumbling over, either on the rope at one side, or else against the rough, rocky wall of this narrow passage. If the charm of 'tobogganing' consists in a judicious mixture of speed and danger, this method of going down a colliery incline doubtless resembles it closely. But for all that, I should prefer to walk another time.

Arrived at the bottom, bruised and shaken, we find ourselves in a sort of dome of coal. Its height is perhaps fourteen or fifteen feet; and, in our inexperience, we at once exclaim: 'Ah, this is more like the real thing!'

'No!' the manager answers; 'you are mistaken. This is only a "fault," and will soon narrow down again to its normal thickness of five or six feet. You fancy it is easier to hew the coal here; quite otherwise. There are narrow bands of "shale" every here and there in these walls of coal; and it requires considerable skill and care to keep *this* out of the trams. While, if the "hewer" fails to send up his coal reasonably clean, it is condemned, and he gets no pay for it. Then there is greater danger from falling stones when the roof is so high. For example, not long ago we had an accident here, not without a comic side to it. One of the colliers was endowed with an immensely long nose. While he was at work, a sharp stone fell in front of him. It fortunately missed his head, and would have dropped clear of any ordinary mortal; but the projecting feature came in the way, and from *it* a good, thick slice was cut clean off! The man suffered much pain, and was laid aside for a long time; but on his return to work, he was complimented on the vast improvement in his appearance, and his nickname, "The Beak," fell into disuse.'

But for all that, we agreed we would choose this open, well-ventilated, and roomy place to work in, if we were colliers; especially after we had been exposed to the faint, close odour which another vein hard by gives out.

When we complained of nausea and begged to be taken away, we were told that strangers had been known to vomit, after standing by the face of this seam of coal for a few minutes.

'The smell serves one useful purpose, in indicating at once what strata we are working; for, as far as I know,' our guide informed us, 'this is the only stinking vein in the district. It is quite safe; there is no choke-damp or other noxious gas. I can't explain how it is so; it is only one of the many puzzles that confront the mining engineer. Another of them is, where

the water comes from we constantly have to contend with. Look at that hole, about big enough for a hen to go through. You'll hardly believe me, when I tell you that a few weeks ago there was a road five feet high running down there. One Sunday evening the deputy-bailiff was going his rounds, to see that all was right for the night-men—who repair the roofs and keep the roads good—to come down, when he found this five-foot way contracted to a height of only *two* feet. He crawled through to see what had happened, and fortunately got back safely before a flood of water burst through the spongy, fireclay floor, which it had crushed up in such a remarkable manner. All the workings below this point were flooded, and are not yet in a fit condition for coal-getting. How much worse it must be in fiery mines, where gases rush out in the same, or rather in a far more, sudden manner, dealing death to scores of hapless colliers, you may now easily realise. We have no such awful perils in this pit, thank God! Yet our men have ample hardships and dangers to face. Now that you have seen them at work, don't omit, when occasion serves, to say a good word for those who do so much for England's prosperity—our colliers.'

With which parting words, our obliging cicerone put us under the care of a subordinate, who led us back safely by the way we had come, and brought us up out of the horrible pit into the cheerful light of day.

A BROTHER OF THE MISERICORDIA.

IN THREE CHAPTERS.—CHAP. III.

A STRANGE droning noise, an atmosphere heavy with incense, and a feeling of imprisonment, are the memories that come back to me when I recall the first moment of returning consciousness. A dull heavy pain in my head, a sensation of numbness, feeling that I did not care to know where I was or how I came there, are the next things I remember. Then suddenly and with a bound I seemed to regain control of my brain, and gazed about me with full awakening. My surroundings gave me ample food for thought. I was in the chapel of the Misericordia; the priest was chanting a mass for the dead, and six of the brethren in their black dresses were kneeling round me holding tapers in their hands. I was dressed in grave-clothes, and in the coffin, which, with a curious recollection of detail, I knew to be a gorgeous one, and remembered that it would, when I reached the burial-ground, be exchanged for a wretched shell, resembling an elongated egg-box, and be sent back to serve for the repose of other still forms, whilst I should be sleeping under the sod. The bier was a low one, and as the head of my coffin was somewhat raised, I commanded a view of the altar, where stood the officiating priest, and the acolytes swinging censers.

An agony of horror possessed me. My first impulse was to cry out and warn the worshippers that this mockery must cease. Then one of the brothers stirred, and the certainty that my would-be murderer was there, watching till I should be safely entombed, made me restrain the sound that rushed to my lips. I closed my

eyes and tried to grasp my position. From what I knew of Italian customs, I was aware that not more than twenty-four hours had been allowed to elapse since my supposed death; and as it was dark, and I must have been with Schidone till nearly seven in the evening, I surmised it to be some time between midnight and dawn, and that the brethren were waiting for daylight to convey me to the cemetery. They watched all night, I knew, and celebrated midnight mass for those whose friends were able and willing to pay for the ceremony, and I guessed that Prince Gherardo had charged himself with these cares on my behalf. Slightly unclosing my lids, I gazed at each kneeling figure in turn. They were of course facing the altar, and my only clue to their identity would be gathered from the hand of each as he held his taper, and from what I could see of his feet. Of the six, four displayed rough, coarsely made shoes, and hands accustomed to labour; one had new boots, but his hands, though white and shapely, were heavy and large. The sixth figure, the one on my left, nearest the altar, was, I knew, Schidone. He was as still as a carved image, his head bowed, his hands grasping a heavy candle; but it did not need the gleam of a great stone in a ring he habitually wore, to tell me it was my enemy. I recognised at once the long thin fingers of his white hands, and felt I could trace the shape of his head beneath the black drapery. How helpless I was—how entirely in his power! If I interrupted the service and for the moment escaped, I knew I should not leave Italy in safety; a man so unscrupulous and so powerful for evil as he was, would not be balked of his prey so easily. A cold sweat bedewed my body, as grim thoughts chased each other through my brain. I was so weak, and every now and then a strange dizziness overpowered me, I felt as though I could not regain my liberty unaided.

The minutes as they passed seemed hours; and yet they flew all too fast, for I could invent no scheme for escape. A moonbeam shone through one of the upper windows, and I thought how lovely it must be outside, how the soft light would be glorifying the Campanile, how deep would be the shadow in the Bigallo, how black would show the inlaid marble of the Duomo! Should I ever see it all again? My eyes wandered round the chapel; I gazed at the picture of St Sebastian over the altar; then at the acolytes and murmuring priest; and then at the long lace-trimmed altar-cloth, which touched the ground on either side. Surely my eyes were at fault, or was that black spot a smouldering cinder from out the censer the boy had swung so carelessly? With rapt intensity I watched the linen with the coal on it, and the little puff of smoke arising therefrom. A few seconds more, and a red line of fire ran up and along the cloth, and the artificial flowers on the altar were ablaze! A shout from the brethren, who seemed to rise simultaneously from their knees, and confusion reigned. Then the voice of Gherardo arose calm and clear. 'Save the picture!' was the command to two of his companions, who immediately obeyed.—'Call the firemen,' he said to another.—'Quick, put the treasures and relics into a place of safety,' was

his command to the priest. But his coolness only availed for a few minutes; for as the flames seemed to take possession of the building, priest, acolytes, and brethren disappeared in a panic, leaving their black robes on the floor.

Gheraldo stood for a moment with the ghastly light of the flames shining on his face, and then advanced to my side. I feared his piety would cause him to carry me out for proper burial, and with a sickening dread I held my breath and allowed no muscle to quiver; but he only muttered: 'È meglio così—fire hides as well as earth,' and walked out of the flaming building.

As his receding footsteps died away, and with the noise of the advancing crowd in my ears, I sat up, then crept from the coffin, and seizing one of the long robes of the brethren, put it on, drew the hood closely over my face, and escaped by the door leading into the Via Calzaioli, whence I sped, barefooted as I was, across the bridge and down the street of the Santo Spirito. The excitement of the numerous people I met was great; but after the first few minutes, I dreaded attracting attention, and had the sense to refrain from running, trusting that the sight of a 'Misericordia' walking barefoot would not excite remark. Several persons gazed at me curiously, but no one spoke; and I arrived at the door of my dwelling in safety. Then I paused. If I entered, there would be danger of questions and inquiries, much talk and confusion, and my escape would certainly reach the Prince's ears. It would be better for me to go elsewhere, and I determined to seek Savelli.

When he was aroused, and had listened to my tale, he promised every aid in his power, but strongly advised me not to return to my lodgings, or to remain in the city longer than was necessary. Together we made plans for my safety and for the help of Amaranthe, for whose welfare I had the greatest anxiety, and for whom I had grave fears. Savelli gave me food and wine and a much needed change of raiment; and I thankfully flung myself on a sofa for a few hours' repose. At the appointed time my friend aroused me; and by nine o'clock we were on our way to the dwelling of Cardinal Bandinelli, in pursuance of our design to invoke his aid in our difficulty. The old porter was hard to persuade that we ought to be admitted; but it occurred to Savelli to request him to send for the cardinal's secretary, with whom he was slightly acquainted. Then we were allowed to go up the great staircase, and pass behind the heavy curtains at the top, whence we were ushered into a plainly furnished apartment, semicircular in form, and with three open windows, commanding a glorious prospect. Here, after waiting a few minutes, we were joined by the secretary, to whom Savelli told enough of the truth to enable him to judge that an interview with the cardinal was imperative. He conducted us to the study, where we found His Eminence seated in a huge armchair and clad in his purple cassock. His little red cap and the large ring he wore were the only indications that his rank was higher than that of a 'Monsignor.' A cup of chocolate was on a table beside him, and a little book of devotion open on his knee.

'Your Eminence will pardon me,' said the

secretary as we advanced, 'but these gentlemen have news for your private ear.'

'Ah, my children, the tidings are bad, I fear, since you come so early; good news can always wait,' said the amiable old man.

We unfolded our tale. It was grievous to speak of the evil deeds of one near him to this benevolent personage; but he showed the ready acumen of a man of the world in dealing with the subject.

'I presume you have no wish to bring an accusation of attempted murder against the Prince?' he said.

'No,' I answered, somewhat unwillingly.

'You must be aware that your interference in the affairs of the Prince's household was most unwarrantable,' he said severely; 'and besides, you would, I think, be unable to bring any proof of such an attempt that would satisfy a judge. The servants would bear witness to his great anxiety about you, and to the statement he made to them as to your illness.—See,' he added, 'here is the newspaper with an account of the affair.'

I took the sheet he handed me, and read that an English artist, 'Cuthberto Ansley,' had died suddenly of heart-disease at the Palazzo Schidone, after returning from a long drive with the Prince, during which he appeared to be in excellent health. Doctor Monte was mentioned as having been in attendance soon after the event.

'To-morrow,' said the old prelate, 'there will be another paragraph stating that the body of the before-mentioned artist was burned in the fire at the chapel of the Misericordia.'

'Will the Prince believe that?' I asked.

'What matters it? He will not care to question it; and as for you, your departure from the city had best be speedy. I will see that Signor Savelli has unquestioned liberty to pack your effects and forward them to you.'

'Did your Eminence receive a letter from the Princess? I posted one to you from her just before my drive with the Prince,' I ventured to say.

'Davvero!' returned he, 'I had the envelope. There was nothing in it but a sheet of blank paper.'

We did not dare to insist on the unhappiness of his niece and the danger she might be in. He promised to take immediate steps for her welfare; but his manner forbade further speech on the subject, and we were dismissed with his Eminence's blessing, a grace craved by Savelli.

Two days afterwards, I arrived, wearied, exhausted, dazed, but safe and sound, at the hospitable house of my cousin at Eastmere. My adventure interested him immensely, and he warmly seconded my wish that Luigi Savelli, to whom I felt so greatly indebted, should be invited to come to England and stay with us for a while. The invitation I wrote procured the following response:

AMICO MIO—I thank you with all my heart for your amiable letter, and your cousin for his most kind invitation. I will come! Yes, my friend, I will visit your green island when your fogs are gone and your sun is come. I will look in your face once more, as I did the night

you came to me from the tomb, like another Ginevra degli Amieri, and we will talk of the pleasant days in Florence.

Since you left us, we have had a tragedy. The Prince Schidone is dead—died by his own hand, say some; died by his wife's hands, say others. It is true he is dead; how, I know not. His valet found him lifeless in the early morning, and there was an empty chloroform phial beside him, and also a lady's kerchief. Amarante is also dead, one may say, for she is gone into the convent of the 'Sepolti Vive' in Rome, which is indeed a living death.

Of more cheerful subjects we will speak when I grasp your hand in the summer.—*Sempre a te.*

LUIGI SAVELLI.

A NEW PROTECTIVE AGAINST TORPEDOES.

WHEN, some years ago, the masonry of the quays in the Seychelles Islands was found to be constantly needing repairs at great expense, in consequence of the deterioration due to violent seas, a plan was devised of protecting the portions exposed to the action of the waves by a palisade of bamboo-canées, the space between which and the structure of the quay itself was filled in with the fibre forming the husk of the cocoa-nut. This cellulose, or cofferdam, as it is called, was found to behave like a sponge, and offer the most effectual shield to the masonry of the quays. The great success of this expedient has led to some experiments, which have just been conducted at Toulon, with a view of utilising coffer-dam as a protective against projectiles, shells, and torpedoes in naval warfare, and with a result that seems to indicate what may become a very extensive employment for the cocoa-nut fibre, which has already found so many uses in commerce, and the trade in which has recently been largely developed in the South Sea Islands.

Coffer-dam, copra, or coir are various commercial terms for the ligneous envelope of the cocoa-nut. This is disintegrated and comminuted by various mechanical processes, which we need not here describe. The cellulose itself is one of the lightest substances known, weighing about five times less than cork. The material used for the experiments was in every case a mixture of fourteen parts of pulverised cellulose and one part of fibres, the latter acting like hair in mortar or cement as a binder. This mixture was compressed so as to form a kind of felting, of the density of one hundred and twenty kilogrammes to the cubic metre, and thus condensed was placed in a case, which was covered with boarding about five inches thick, the depth of the cofferdam being about two feet. These particular thicknesses were chosen as of dimensions practically applicable to vessels which it might be desired to protect by this means.

The first experiment was designed to test the effect of an ordinary projectile which was fired from a cannon of nine inches calibre, at a distance of only sixty yards, against the case of cofferdam above described. The projectile pierced the case through and through, carrying away a quantity of the cellulose, but a remarkably small quantity,

when the cubic content of the projectile is considered. The most important feature, however, of this experiment was that, immediately after the shot, the perforation was found to be filled up by the cofferdam, so that it was impossible for a man to thrust his arm through the place penetrated by the projectile. It was then attempted to force water through the place where the shot had passed; but even after several minutes, only drops were found to ooze through. In proportion as it absorbs liquid, the cellulose augments in volume and density, and tends thereby to withstand the further entrance of water.

The next experiment was made with a view to show the incombustibility of the cofferdam, and its power to resist or extinguish explosive projectiles and shells. First, a portion of its contents was removed from the above-mentioned case, and a large quantity of burning charcoal was placed in it, and covered with the cellulose to the depth of from three to four inches, when the charcoal was speedily extinguished. Next, from the former distance of sixty yards, shells of nine inches in diameter were shot into the case of cofferdam and burst there—the fragments nearly all remaining in the cellulose, into which no water was found to have entered. Moreover, the material is said to have offered such obstruction to the few splinters of the shell which passed through it, that they would scarcely retain velocity enough to be dangerous. The third experiment was one for testing the resistance of the cofferdam to the effects of torpedoes. Here the case used to contain the cellulose was of sheet-iron. The torpedo was attached to it on the under side, and exploded. In this instance the effects were more violent—a side was blown off the case, and the mass of the cofferdam was found to have been pierced through and through with a small longitudinal perforation. But even in this case it is considered that the force of the blow inflicted by the torpedo was considerably attenuated. The question is now under serious consideration, whether vessels of war should not have a protecting envelope of this cofferdam, which, in conjunction with water-tight compartments, would, it is thought, prove the best defence against all kinds of artillery.

BEE AND ANT PHENOMENA.

VERY important and highly interesting discoveries have been lately made on this subject, which enable us easily to account for hitherto unexplained phenomena in bee-life. It is well known that the honey of our honey-bees when mixed with tincture of litmus acquires an unmistakably red tint, a fact no doubt owing to the subtilised formic acid it contains; the presence of which acid likewise imparts to the raw honey its power of 'keeping' for a considerable length of time. Honey which has been clarified by means of water and exposure to heat—the so-called 'sirup of honey'—spoils more easily than the ordinary kind, because the formic acid in it has in a great measure been expelled. The honey of very fierce tribes of bees has a peculiarly acrid taste and pungent smell; this is

due to the excess of formic acid contained in such honey.

Till lately, complete ignorance prevailed as to the manner in which this so essential component of honey, formic acid, found its way into the substance secreted from the stomach or 'honey-bag' of the busy workers; recent discoveries have, however, enlightened us on this point. These show us that the sting serves the bee not only as a means of defence, and sometimes of offence, but possesses likewise the almost more important power of infusing into the stored-up honey an antiseptic substance, not subject to fermentation. It has been lately observed that bees in hives, even when left undisturbed, from time to time rub off against the honey-comb, from the point of their sting, a tiny drop of 'bee-poison'; in other words, formic acid. This excellent preservative is thus little by little introduced into the honey. The more irritable and vicious the bees are, the greater the quantity of formic acid conveyed into the honey by them; a sufficient admixture of which is essential to the production of good honey.

The praise, therefore, that has been so often lavished by adepts in such things on that indolent member of the bee-tribe, the Ligurian bee, which hardly ever stings, is in point of fact misplaced. The observation just made above will explain, too, why the stingless honey-bee of South America collects but little honey; for it is notorious that when trees have been felled which have been inhabited by the stingless 'Melipone,' but little honey has been found in them. And indeed, what inducement have the bees to store up honey that will not keep, since it contains no formic acid? Of the eighteen different kinds of North Brazilian honey-bees known to the naturalist, only three possess a sting.

A very striking phenomenon in the habits of a certain species of ant is now amply accounted for. There exist, as is well known, various tribes of grain-collecting ants. The seeds of grasses and other plants remain stored up by them, often for years in their little granaries, without germinating. In India there is a very small red ant which drags into its cells grains of wheat and oats. But the creatures are so tiny, that, with their utmost efforts, it takes from eight to ten of them to carry off even one single grain. They move along in two separate rows, over smooth or rough ground, as the case may be, and even up and down stairs, in steady regular progression. They have often to traverse more than a thousand metres to carry their booty into the common storehouse. The celebrated naturalist Moggridge repeatedly observed that when the ants were prevented from reaching their granaries, the seeds in the granaries began to sprout. The same thing happened in storehouses that had been abandoned by them. We must infer, then, that ants possess the means of suspending or arresting the action of germination without destroying or impairing the actual vitality of the grain, or without impairing the vital principle that lies latent in the grain.

The famous English scientist, Sir John Lubbock, in his work entitled *Ants, Bees, and Wasps*, relates these and similar facts, and adds that it was not yet known how the ants prevented their provision of grain from sprouting. But now it

has been proved that this is due simply to the preservative power of the formic acid, the effect of which is so powerful that it can either arrest the process of germination, or destroy it altogether in the seed.

We will further mention that there exists among us a kind of ant that lives on seeds and stores them up. This is our *Lasius niger*, which, according to the statement made by Wittmack at the meeting of amateur naturalists at Berlin, carries seeds of violets, and likewise of ground ivy (*Veronica hederaefolia*), into its cells. In his description of an Indian ant (*Pheidole providens*), Sykes relates that the above-mentioned kind collects large stores of grass-seeds. He notices likewise that after a monsoon storm, the ants bring their stores of grain out of their granaries, in order to dry them. It seems, therefore, that excessive moisture destroys the preservative power of the formic acid; hence this drying process.

We see, then, that the winter provision of honey for the bees, and the store of grain which serves as food for the ants, are preserved by means of one and the same fluid—namely, formic acid. The use of formic acid as a means of preserving fruit, and the like, was first suggested by Feierabend in the year 1877.

LOVE AND DEATH.

LIFE may hold sweetness yet : I would not die ;
For He might come with smiles upon his lip ;
Then from my heart the weary years would slip,
And I should greet him with a joyous cry,
Forgiving and forgetting all the past,
Just for the sake of love come back at last.
Oh, life may yet be sweet : I would not die.

Child, Fate has not been kind to you and me ;
Your baby kisses could not ease my pain ;
While in that other face I looked in vain
For signs of what I knew could never be.
Often I drew away your clinging grasp,
To seek again that cold and careless clasp.
No ; life has not been kind to you and me.

And Death is coming. Ah, will Death be kind ?
Will he, some day, bring me my truant love ?
Or shall I float in ether pure above,
Passionless, sexless, and not hope to find
Him who made life a blessing and a curse ?
Will Death bring better, happier times, or worse ?
Ah, Death is coming fast : will he be kind ?

Love, have you never known one bitter hour ?
Never looked back with tender, sweet regret
To that past happy summer when we met,
When first I knew my beauty—fatal dower !—
Had chained your roaming fancy ? What a chain !
Woven in madness from despair and pain,
And idly worn to kill an idle hour.

Child, listen to me : Love is worse than Death ;
For Death takes all, but Love takes fruit and bloom,
And leaves the worthless husk to rot in gloom.
It takes the crown from life ; the weary breath
Must labour on until Death brings relief,
And blots out all the weariness and grief.
Ah, Love is cruel : merciful is Death.

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